

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 27-29, without prejudice, and amend claims 19 and 30-31,  
as follows:

1-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A magnetic head comprising:

a slider having a rail with a top surface extending in a longitudinal direction  
thereof;

a thin-film element part to write and read information, formed on an end of said  
rail top surface of said slider along the longitudinal direction; and

a protective film formed on said thin-film element part and defining a distal  
end of the rail along the longitudinal direction whereby air exits said slider at said distal end,

said protective film having a first recess which extends in the longitudinal  
direction between said thin-film element part and said distal end said first recess being lower  
than said rail top surface, ~~and~~ having a width defined by a width of said rail, and having a top  
surface substantially parallel to the rail top surface.

20-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously presented) A magnetic disk apparatus comprising:  
a head supporting part to carry a magnetic head claimed in claim 19, to write  
and read information by enabling said head to float over a recording medium;  
an arm part on which said head supporting part is provided; and  
a driving part to move said arm part over said recording medium.

23-29. (Cancelled)

30. (Currently Amended) A magnetic head comprising:  
a slider having a rail with a top surface extending in a longitudinal direction  
thereof, said rail formed on a surface of said slider;  
a thin-film element part to write and read information, formed on an end of said  
rail top surface of said slider along the longitudinal direction; and  
a protective film formed on said thin-film element part and defining a distal  
end of the rail along the longitudinal direction whereby air exits said slider at said distal end,  
said protective film having a recess which extends in the longitudinal direction  
between said thin-film element part and said distal end and having a top surface substantially  
parallel to the rail top surface,

said recess being lower than said rail top surface and having a width equal to a width of said rail.

31. (Currently Amended) The magnetic head as claimed in claim 19, wherein said protective film further has a second recess which extends ~~from~~between said thin-film element part and a side of said slider in a direction generally perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

32. (Previously Presented) The magnetic head as claimed in claim 31, wherein said second recess has a top surface which is substantially parallel to said rail top surface and is lower than the first recess.